Doctoral Degree (Research) in Clinical Psychology - Awards and Programs Schedule

Schedule to the Higher Degree by Research Policy.

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) As a higher education provider authorised to self-accredit, the University of Newcastle (University) is responsible under the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (Cth) for ensuring that programs comply with the Provider Course [Program] Accreditation Standards. This Schedule provides the detailed principles and criteria that underpin the self-accreditation process for each Doctoral Degree (Research) in Clinical Psychology award that may be delivered and conferred by the University.

(2) This Schedule supports the implementation of the Governance Rule and the Higher Degree by Research Policy. The Governance Rule describes each type of higher degree by research qualification offered by the University and provides a description of Academic Senate's role in approving and monitoring these programs.

(3) Within the Schedule the general program principles and structures have been tabulated and the approved programs that are offered under it will be listed on the University website.

(4) In the event of an inconsistency between subordinate policy documents and any Rule(s) or Schedule to the Rule(s), the Rule(s) made by Council prevails to the extent of the inconsistency.

(5) Extracts from AQF (Second Edition) have been included in this document with permission of the Australian Qualification Framework Council (January 2013).

Section 2 - Principles and Program Structures

Model: Doctoral Degree (Research)

(6) This table describes an AQF level 10 program leading to the award of Doctoral Degree (Research) in Clinical Psychology under the Higher Degree by Research Policy.

Volume of Learning	320 units completed in 4 years full-time or equivalent.
Purpose	The degree of Doctoral Degree (Research) in Clinical Psychology shall be an ungraded degree awarded for an original and significant contribution of merit achieved through a program of advanced study and research in Clinical Psychology.
Time requirements	The thesis, coursework and clinical placements shall be completed and submitted for examination in: a) not less than two years of full-time or equivalent part-time enrolment from admission to candidature, except with the permission of the Dean of Graduate Research. b) not more than four full-time years of enrolment or equivalent part-time enrolment from admission to candidature, except with the permission of the Dean of Graduate Research.

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Principles and Structure		A candidate will be admitted to a program of advanced study and research approved and completed to the satisfaction of the Head of School or Deputy Head of School. The research will primarily be embodied in a thesis; and other work as approved by the Head of School or Deputy Head of School may be submitted and considered in conjunction with the thesis. Coursework and clinical placements are a requirement of the program.
Admission and Selection Criteria		An applicant for admission to candidature for the degree shall: 1. hold a four-year degree (or an equivalent three year/one year postgraduate combination) with Honours Class 1 or Honours Class 2, Division 1 in Psychology that has been accredited by the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council; and 2. be eligible for provisional registration with the Psychology Board of Australia; and 3. satisfy the School of Psychological Sciences of their suitability for the professional practice of Clinical Psychology. Entry to the program is competitive and places are limited. Applicants must submit a professional portfolio as detailed in Appendix 1 which will allow the School to evaluate the applicant's suitability. Shortlisted applicants are then interviewed. For international applicants: 1. it is a requirement of the Psychology Board of Australia (PsyBA) that all non-Australian qualifications, including qualifications from New Zealand, are assessed by the Australian Psychological Society (APS). The APS is the national assessing authority in Australia for assessment of overseas academic qualifications in psychology. For a set fee, the APS determines the level at which an applicant's qualifications are equivalent to an accredited Australian program of study; 2. applicants who have not completed their secondary education in English, will be required to undertake a language proficiency test within two years of applying for registration. Applicants will be required to achieve a minimum IELTS score of 7. Further details can be found on the PsyBA website. An applicant shall not be admitted to candidature unless adequate supervision and resources are available. Whether these are available shall be determined by the Head of School or Deputy Head of School. Closing date: Applications close on the first Friday in October.
Specialisation or Major		This section is intentionally blank.
Additional Admission Requirements		Completion of Coursework and Placements: Admission to the degree shall also be conditional upon the satisfactory completion of the prescribed coursework and clinical placements. Further additional admission requirements may be prescribed by the Head of School or Deputy Head of School.
Learning Outcomes Descriptors		Learning outcomes descriptors underpin the design of all Doctoral Degree (Research) programs offered by the University. Learning outcomes descriptors will be developed for each program as prescribed by AQF for the purpose of qualifying individuals who apply a substantial body of knowledge to research, investigate and develop new knowledge, in one or more fields of investigation, scholarship or professional practice.
i	**Knowledge**	Graduates of a Doctoral Degree will have: i) a substantial body of knowledge at the frontier of a field of work or learning, including knowledge that constitutes an original contribution; ii) substantial knowledge of research principles and methods applicable to the field of work or learning.
ii	**Skills**	Graduates of a Doctoral Degree will have: i) cognitive skills to demonstrate expert understanding of theoretical knowledge and to reflect critically on that theory and practice; ii) cognitive skills and use of intellectual independence to think critically, evaluate existing knowledge and ideas, undertake systematic investigation and reflect on theory and practice to generate original knowledge; iii) expert technical and creative skills applicable to the field of work or learning; iv) communication skills to explain and critique theoretical propositions, methodologies and conclusions; v) communication skills to present cogently a complex investigation of originality or original research for external examination against international standards and to communicate results to peers and the community; and vi) expert skills to design, implement, analyse, theorise and communicate research that makes a significant and original contribution to knowledge and/or professional practice.

iii	**Application of Knowledge and Skills**	Graduates of a Doctoral Degree will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: i) with intellectual independence and skills; ii) with initiative and creativity in new situations and/or for further learning; iii) with full responsibility and accountability for personal outputs; iv) to plan and execute original research; and v) with the ongoing capacity to generate new knowledge, including in the context of professional practice.
Qualification for the Award		The candidate will be recommended for admission to the degree by the Dean of Graduate Research on the advice of the Research Training Sub-Committee.
Grading of the Award		The award will be conferred as an ordinary award.
Qualification Title		Doctor of Philosophy
Pathways - General		Our pathways for students have been developed in accordance with the AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy. Approved entry pathways are described in Admission and Selection Criteria, above.
Pathways – Credit and Advanced Standing		Credit is not consistent with the framework of a Higher Degree by Research and therefore cannot be granted. A Master of Philosophy is not available in Clinical Psychology.
Pathways – Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)		For research degrees RPL is a process that assesses the individual's formal, non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required learning outcomes, competency outcomes or standards for entry to a qualification. For research degrees, candidates are assessed on research experience: i.e. demonstrated research experience that is equivalent to the standard of Honours Class II, Division 1 such as professional work experience in a research environment, published papers in refereed journals, conference papers or equivalent creative material. RPL will not be recognised for credit or advanced standing.
Pathways – combined degree		A candidate for the degree shall not be concurrently enrolled as a candidate for any other degree or award whether of this or another tertiary institution, except with the permission of the Dean of Graduate Research. Candidates in a JARHDP will be concurrently enrolled at the partner institution and the University of Newcastle.
Pathways – nested or integrated qualifications		Nested or integrated qualifications are not consistent with the framework of a Doctoral Degree (Research).
Pathways – Exit		There is no exit award from a Doctor of Philosophy.
Pathways - Graduate		The Doctor of Philosophy is the peak award granted by Academic Senate.
Professional Accreditation		This degree program is accredited by the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council and approved by the College of Clinical Psychologists for the purpose of determining eligibility for membership of the College.
Additional Information		Submission of Thesis for Examination The candidate shall submit three copies of the thesis in accordance with the provisions of the Higher Degree by Research Policy and the Higher Degree by Research Procedure, and in the case of a Jointly Awarded Doctoral Degree (JADD), the Memorandum of Agreement. Examination of Thesis The Dean of Graduate Research shall appoint two examiners and at least one reserve, none of whom shall be a member of the staff of the University.

Section 3 - Relaxing Provision

(7) To provide for exceptional circumstances arising in any case, the President of Academic Senate, on the recommendation of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) or relevant College Pro Vice-Chancellor may relax any provision of this Schedule provided that the relaxation:

a. does not compromise compliance with external obligations (including but not limited to contractual, legislative

or accreditation requirements;

b. does not override a decision made under a formal delegation of authority;
c. does not replace a decision that is subject to a formal delegation of authority; and
d. gives due consideration to the principles of procedural fairness.

Section 4 - Reporting

(8) The President of the Academic Senate will report all applications of the relaxing provision of this Schedule to the Academic Senate.

Section 5 - Appendix 1 – Additional Admission and Selection Criteria

(9) Entry to the program is competitive and places are limited. In addition to meeting the admission requirements detailed in the schedule, applicants must submit a professional portfolio. Shortlisted applicants are then interviewed.

(10) The professional portfolio must include:

a. an application letter (3 x A4 pages maximum) which clearly states why the applicant should be considered for the program and a statement that addresses how they meet the following criteria:
    i. demonstrated understanding of Clinical Psychology and the areas in which a Clinical Psychologist might work;
    ii. relevant experience helping people with physical and/or mental health problems, or otherwise working with children, adolescents, adults or the elderly;
    iii. relevant additional training (e.g. workshops, short courses).
    iv. desirable criteria:
        - research experience additional to Honours degree;
        - involvement with professional organisations (e.g. APS or Australasian Society for Behavioural Health and Medicine (ASBHM));
        - university or Civil Awards;
        - extracurricular activities;
b. a resume;
c. reports from two referees are also required and must be written on the appropriate forms. At least one of the referees should be a registered psychologist who can comment on the applicant's experience and/or potential to practice in Health/Clinical Psychology;
d. certified copies of university transcripts;
e. brief outline (3 pages maximum) of the research proposed.

(11) Further information on the application process is available on the University website.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	12th November 2025
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Approval Authority	President Academic Senate
Approval Date	11th November 2025
Expiry Date	1st June 2026
Responsible Executive	Craig Simmons Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)
Enquiries Contact	Graduate Research

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Academic Senate" - The Academic Senate of the University as described in the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Graduate" - (Noun) Has the same meaning as in section 3(2) of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Class" - When referring to a class attended by Students, a class is any teaching and learning activity of a course. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Advanced standing" - A form of credit for any previous learning as defined by the Australian Qualifications Framework.

"Applicant" - Where referring to a student, an applicant is an individual seeking entry to a program or course offered by the University or its partner organisation/s. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Award" - When referring to a University qualification, this term means an academic qualification approved by Academic Senate that is conferred when a student has met the relevant program requirements. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Candidature" - The period of time between acceptance of offer and termination, withdrawal from, or completion of a higher degree by research program, including periods when a candidate is not enrolled.

"Course" - When referring to a course offered by the University, a course is a set of learning activities or learning opportunities with defined, assessed and recorded learning outcomes. A course will be identified by an alphanumeric course code and course title. Course types include core courses, compulsory courses, directed courses, capstone courses and electives. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Credit" - When referring to course credit, credit is the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualifications. Credit can reduce the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Candidate" - With regard to Higher Degree by Research it has the same meaning as student. For all other instances it is a person considered for appointment to a position.

"Exit award" - An academic qualification that is conferred when a student has met the program requirements of a linked program within the same field of study as listed in the relevant Awards and Programs Schedule.

"Jointly Awarded Doctoral Degree (JADD)" - Is an arrangement whereby a doctoral degree candidate is jointly supervised by the University and another institution, is enrolled at both institutions and receives one award bearing the seals of both institutions. Each JADD candidature is governed by an individual Candidate Agreement and a JADD Agreement between the collaborating institutions.

"Learning outcome" - In accordance with the AQF definitions, the expression of a set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.

"Postgraduate" - Any qualification being at the level of Graduate Certificate or above.

"Program" - When referring to learning, a program is a sequence of approved learning, usually leading to an Award. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Research" - As defined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, or any replacing Code or document.

"School" - An organisational unit forming part of a College or Division, responsible for offering a particular course.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

"Thesis" - A dissertation involving research by a candidate for the award of a Higher Degree by Research (HDR) qualification.

"Unit" - When referring to an academic unit, unit means the proportional amount of academic credit allotted to a course. This term is used to define the requirements for a program award of the University and indicate a student's enrolment load. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

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